

Appl. No. : **10/647,369**
Filed : **August 25, 2003**

IN THE DRAWINGS

Please amend Figures 1 and 3 as follows:

In Figure 1, please change reference numeral "5" to "52".

In Figure 3, please delete the reference numerals "62, 64" and the lead line associated therewith.

The above changes are shown in red in the attached marked-up copies and replacement sheets containing Figures 1 and 3.

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COMMENTS

Claims 1-19 are now pending the present application, Claims 3, 7, and 15 having been amended and new Claims 18 and 19 having been added. The claims set forth above include markings to show the changes made by way of the present amendment, deletions being in ~~strikeout~~ and additions being underlined.

In response to the Office Action mailed October 6, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following comments.]

Amendments To Specification Address Noted Informalities

The foregoing amendments to the specification correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Specifically, Applicant has amended paragraph 51 of the present specification as requested by the Examiner. These changes do not add new matter and thus entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

The claims stand objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(g), the Examiner's position being that the broadest claim is not presented first. However, Applicant would like to point out that it has long been established that 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(g) does not require that the independent claims be arranged such that the broadest independent claim is first. Rather, it has long been the position of the Patent Office that 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(g) merely suggests that dependent claims be arranged subsequently to their corresponding independent claims.

Additionally, Applicant would like to point out that Claim 10 includes the phrase "means for coupling." On the other hand, Claim 1 does not include a means-plus-function phrase. Applicant submits that 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(g) does not require applicants or examiners to compare different types of independent claims to determine whether or not one type of independent claim is broader or narrower than another type of independent claim. For example, such an analysis would be analogous to comparing the scope of an apparatus claim and a method claim. Thus, Applicant submits that it is not necessary to renumber the claims of the present application.

All Pending Claims Now Fully Comply With 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 7 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the Examiner maintaining that the language therein is indefinite as filed. In response, Applicant has amended these claims solely to make these claims more easily readable, and not to narrow or affect the scope of the claims.

In response to the rejection of Claims 7 and 15 based on the recitation of the term "type", Applicant has amended Claims 7 and 15 to delete the term "type." Thus, Applicant submits that the present rejection is moot.

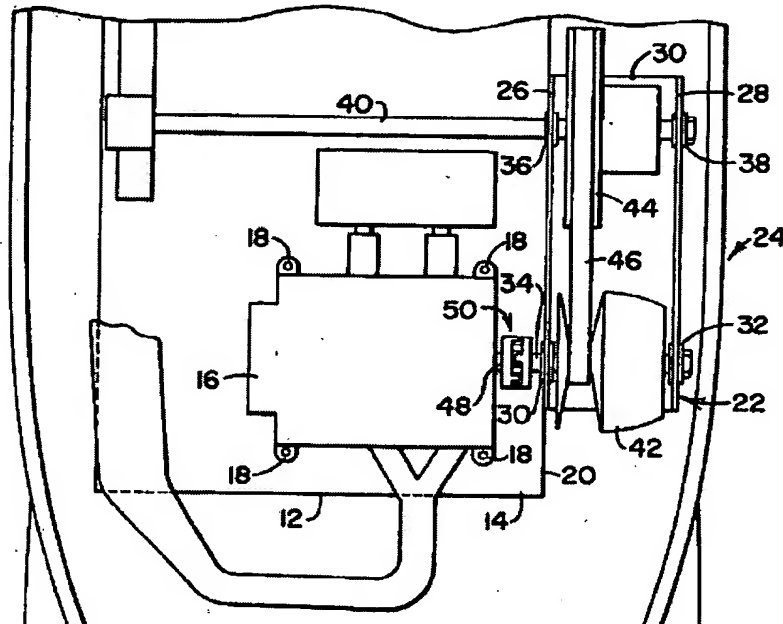
Applicant would also like to note that Claim 3 has been amended to add the term "said" solely to make Claim 3 more easily readable and not to narrow or effect the scope of the claim.

Leonard et al. '882 does Not Anticipate Claims 1, 2, and 4-17

Claims 1, 2 and 14, 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Leonard et al. '882. Applicant respectfully traverses the present rejection.

Leonard et al. '882 teaches a snowmobile having an internal combustion engine 16 mounted in a conventional manner. As shown in the enlarged portion of Figure 2 reproduced below, the crankshaft 48 of the engine 16 extends outwardly from the engine body to a coupling device 50 which is disposed on the *outside* of the engine 16.

FIG. 2



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A coupling 50 is also disposed on the outside of the engine 16. The coupling 50 connects the end of the crankshaft 48 with another shaft 34. The shaft 34 is supported by bearings 30 which are also disposed on the outside of the engine 30. In particular, the bearings 30 are supported by a wall 20 which forms a portion of the frame 12 of the snowmobile. Thus, it is crystal clear that the shaft 34 is *completely outside* of the engine 16 and is in fact supported by the bearing 30 mounted *on the frame* of the snowmobile and by the coupling 50 which is also disposed *completely outside* of the engine 16.

In contrast, Claim 1 recites, among other recitations, "a coupling system for coupling the engine with said transmission, said coupling system comprising a drive member and a driven member, said drive member being located along said first axis and being coupled with said crankshaft, said driven member being located along said first axis and being coupled with said transmission, said driven member being rotatably mounted in said crankcase, and said drive member being coupled with said driven member." Similarly, Claim 10 recites "a means for coupling said engine with said transmission within said crankcase."

A nonlimiting embodiment of the vehicle recited in Claims 1 and 10 is illustrated in Figure 4 of the present application. As shown in Figure 4, the crankshaft 76 is connected to a coupling system 32 which, in turn, is connected to a driven shaft 88. Additionally, as shown in Figure 4, the coupling system is mounted in the crankcase 74 by bearings 172, 174. As noted in the present specification, this arrangement provides advantages in reducing loads on the crankshaft,

Nowhere does Leonard et al. '882 teach or suggest such an arrangement of a coupling system being mounted in a crankcase of an engine. Rather, as shown in Figure 2 of Leonard et al. '882, as noted above, the driven shaft 34 of Leonard et al. '882 is supported by bearing 30 that is mounted to a sidewall 20 of the frame 12 of the snowmobile. Thus, applicant submits that Claims 1 and 10 clearly and non-obviously define over the Leonard et al. '882 reference.

Additionally, applicant submits that Claims 2-9 and 11-17 also define over the Leonard et al. '882 reference, not only because they depend from one of Claims 1 and 10, but also on their own merit.

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The Applied Combination of Leonard et al./Barthruff Does Not Make Claim 3 Obvious

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Leonard et al. '882 in view of Barthruff. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. However, as noted above, Applicant submits that Claim 1 clearly and nonobviously defines over the Leonard et al. '882 reference. Thus, Applicant submits that Claim 3 also defines over the proposed Leonard et al. '882 /Barthruff combination, not only because it depends from Claim 1, but also on its own merit. Thus, the present rejection is moot.

Response to Drawing Objections

The drawings stand objected to under 37 CFR § 1.84(p)(5) based on certain informalities. In response, Applicant has amended Figure 1 to change the reference numeral "5" to "52". Additionally, in Figure 3, Applicant has deleted the secondary use of reference characters "62, 64" and the lead line extending therefrom. Applicant has included herewith a marked up set of Figures 1 and 3 showing the changes noted above as well as replacement sheets including amended Figures 1 and 3.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims and specification. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any

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undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

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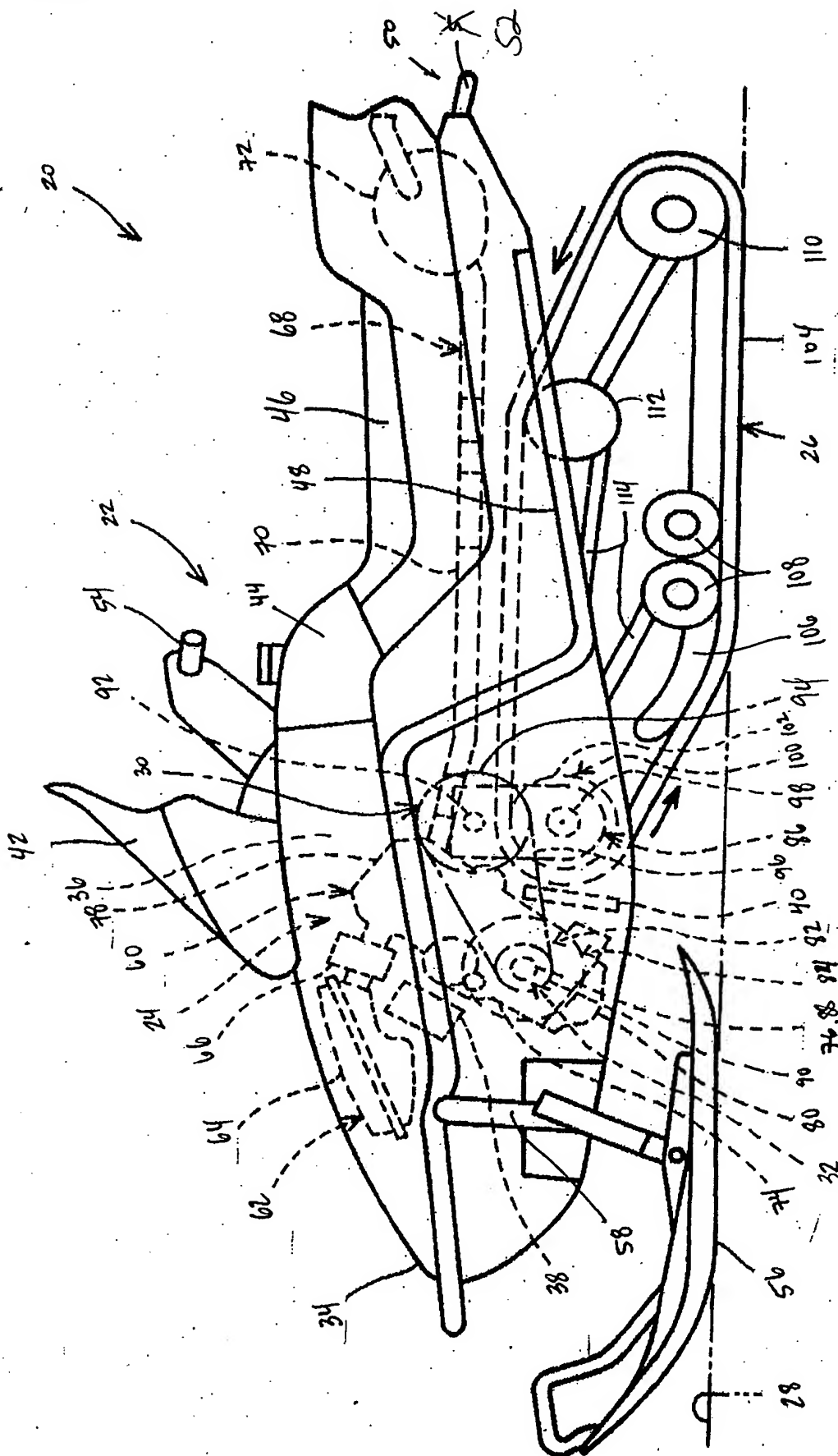


FIGURE 1

FIGURE 3

